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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

In the Matter of

Federal-State Joint Board on  
Universal Service

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Public Notice re:  
CC Docket No. 96 - 45  
[DA 96-1891]

COMMENTS OF  
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
ON QUESTIONS IN PUBLIC NOTICE OF  
November 18, 1996

Submitted,  
December 19, 1996

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## Appendix 1

## **1 General Comments**

The American Library Association (ALA) respectfully submits its comments on the Recommended Decision adopted on November 7, 1996 by the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service in response to the Public Notice issued by the Common Carrier Bureau on November 18, 1996 in the above referenced proceeding. The American Library Association, founded in 1876, is the oldest and largest library association in the world. Its concerns span all types of libraries: state, public, school, academic, and special libraries. With a membership of more than 57,000 librarians, library trustees, library educators, friends of libraries, and other interested persons from every state, ALA is the chief advocate for the people of the United States in their search for the highest quality of library and information services. ALA has been an active participant in this proceeding, filing in all three rounds of public comments during the Joint Board's deliberations and welcomes the opportunity to provide further information and assistance in this process.

ALA commends the hard work of the Joint Board and their staffs in producing the Recommended Decision. ALA believes that by allowing discounts to apply to any available telecommunications service, this recommended decision provides maximum flexibility for libraries to choose those telecommunications services that best serve the needs of their communities. ALA, as will be elaborated on further below, also believes that the 20%-90% range of discounts can provide for significant and meaningful discounts for libraries if indexed to appropriate measures of economic need and, in high cost areas, if applied to reasonably

comparable prices for similar services. Furthermore, ALA appreciates the Joint Board's efforts to minimize the administrative burdens placed on libraries by allowing self-certification of eligibility for the discounts. ALA also concurs with the Joint Board's recommendation that efficient and effective discount support mechanisms, including appointment of a neutral fund administrator, be implemented so that discounted services can be deployed by the 1997-1998 school year.

## **2 Discount Methodology**

ALA has several concerns regarding the impact and appropriateness of the discount matrix proposed by the Joint Board. We will raise some considerations at this point, but also intend to continue our analysis. In particular, we have funded a study to gain more precise information on libraries serving rural and economically disadvantaged areas. We hope these studies will produce information in time to provide useful input to FCC consideration.

Our comments on the discount methodology address the following:

- (3.1) determination of low income discount eligibility,
- (3.2) determination of high cost eligibility, and
- (3.3) determination of the appropriate discounts for each category.

### **2.1 Low income eligibility**

Regardless of its appropriateness for public schools, a formula based on free or reduced cost school lunch program eligibility is not appropriate for most libraries. There is no requirement that the methodology should be the same for libraries and schools. Accordingly, the

FCC should pick a separate method for each type of institution that 1) appropriately reflects the relative income level of the population served by the institution and 2) can easily be applied by institutions and verified by providers.

School lunch eligibility fails on both counts for libraries. Libraries would not necessarily have easy access to information that would allow them to map their service areas against school lunch programs. Without such data in hand, it is impossible to determine whether such a mapping would adequately reflect the needs of libraries or library systems for deeper discounts. There are broad differences from state to state on the configuration of library and school district boundaries; they frequently are not identical.

However, the law may offer another approach for libraries. The new Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), which replaces the former Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), is the newly updated reference for library eligibility. A poverty factor specified in LSTA for targeted library and information services may provide an appropriate alternative method of determining eligibility for deeper discounts for libraries in low income areas.

Regarding the outreach services portion of LSTA, the statute (subsection 231(a)(2)) refers to "families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) applicable to a family of the size involved."

ALA is in the process of determining how public libraries are distributed based on this data, and would be pleased to work with Commission or Joint Board staff and staff of

appropriate federal agencies to evaluate the appropriateness of this formula for the low income factor in discounted rates for libraries. This data would have the advantage of already being in place for another purpose (the Community Services Block Grant) and of being updated annually. Further, it is newly applicable to the Library Services and Technology Act, which, in turn, is linked to the library portion of universal service through the eligibility requirements specified by the amended Communications Act.

## **2.2 High cost eligibility**

**Additional discounts for high cost areas are not only appropriate, they are clearly called for in the law.** The Joint Board report seems somewhat ambivalent on this point, ultimately basing its recommendation that high-cost be a consideration in deciding affordability based on a letter from 26 Senators (Senate Working Group) stating that such was the intent of the law. We concur with the Senate Working Group. We also think that such a consideration is clearly extant in the Act, itself. Universal Service principle (3) not only expresses such a consideration as an explicit intent of the law, it also states what the proper goal of the discount should be. Principle (3) says:

**ACCESS IN RURAL AND HIGH COST AREAS.--**Consumers in all regions of the nation, including low-income consumers and those in rural, insular, and high cost areas, should have access to telecommunications and information services, *including interexchange services and advanced telecommunication and information services*, ... that are available at rates that are *reasonably comparable to rates charged for similar services in urban areas.*" (ALA emphasis) Section 254 (b) (3).

**Using unseparated loops costs as a surrogate for determining "high cost" is consistent with the ALA suggestions in previous filings.** The method proposed by the Joint

Board is based on the comparisons of unseparated loop costs within a region. The assumption is that this would be a useful surrogate for determining relative costs of all special services.

Although we have as yet seen little or no comparative data to base that assumptions on, ALA believes that such a surrogate may well be a convenient and useful method of estimating eligibility and, as we will argue below, provide the basis for calculating the appropriate discount to be applied.

### **2.3 Discount methodology**

The table following paragraph 555 of the Joint Board's recommendations does not adequately take into account the needs of libraries for discounts in high cost regions nor reflect the intent of the Act to derive "comparable" rates for such discounts. ALA does not believe that the discount methodology in the Joint Board recommendations, as reflected in the table, is appropriate. Rather, it is arbitrary and does not reflect adequately the needs of institutions in high cost areas.

**First, institutions in the lowest two categories, those serving predominately low income areas and those most in need of deep discounts, receive no adjustments for high cost.** Yet, as has been demonstrated in previous filings, prices for services such as T1 connection for those institutions can be eleven to twelve times the comparable price in low cost areas.<sup>1</sup>

ALA's position is still that discounts for service in rural, low-income areas are particularly

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<sup>1</sup>See for example, Letter from Linda G. Roberts, Director, Office of Educational Technology, Department of Education to the Members of the Joint Board regarding Telecommunications Access Cost for School Districts, November 4, 1996.

important. The net benefit, moreover, would be very high, since, as ALA has pointed out, libraries are likely to be the only access point to high value information services for residents and small businesses. As further illustration, Appendix 1 is an article from the November 1996 issue of *American Libraries* that describes efforts of rural libraries in Utah to serve the needs of their patrons for access to electronic information services.

**Second, in the case of those institutions that do receive a high cost adjustment, the discounts in no way reflect the true cost differential.** The high cost adjustment ranges from 5% to a maximum of 10%. As stated above, prices for special services in rural, insular and high cost areas can be many times those for similar services in urban areas. Such discounts may, and ALA believes, should be very deep. These may seem expensive when considered on an individual basis; however, in the aggregate, they are not likely to cause a significant increase in the drain on the universal service fund.

**Third, extending such deep discounts to libraries in high cost areas is the only reasonable way to meet the overall objective of Principle 3.** Providing a publicly available access point to high speed data networking services at a library is far more feasible and affordable than trying to assure individual residential access to advanced services at comparable rates.

#### **ALA proposed methodology**

ALA proposes a two step process to derive the appropriate discount and to take into account both high cost and low-income needs. For the moment, we will assume that unseparated



loop costs are a reasonable surrogate for cost differential.

Step 1 (High cost adjustment)

Derive a low cost threshold based on loop costs. (The Joint Board's recommended threshold is at the 67th percentile-the lowest two-thirds.) The high cost discount for a particular institution would be the ratio of the low cost threshold to the loop cost in its particular area. This discount rate, applied to the lowest comparable price in the institution's area, would be the high cost adjustment.

Step 2 (Low income adjustment)

Add an additional discount based on some measure of economic need such as the one described in Section 3.1, above, derived for LSTA purposes. The outreach services portion of LSTA, the statute (subsection 231(a)(2)) refers to "families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) applicable to a family of the size involved." For LSTA, this language simply indicates the portion of the community or state that may receive special attention for targeted library assistance. However, this determination is based on data derived from the U.S. Census Bureau and this data can be easily adapted for use in a series of step discounts as was recommended by the Joint Board. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau does report on the percentage of households at or below the poverty level. ALA is working on obtaining data to determine how the distribution of libraries matches the distribution of poverty areas based on U.S. Census data. Libraries would self certify

the percentage of poor households in their service area in order to be eligible for the appropriate discount.

In some cases, the overall percentage of poor households in a library's service area may not adequately reflect the existence of extreme economic disadvantage in some areas. For example a library system with several branches may have a branch located in an extreme poverty area, yet, because of the relatively well off condition of the remaining area, this condition is not reflected in the overall level of poor households for the library system's entire service area.

In such a case, ALA recommends that library systems be allowed to report each branch service area separately and allocate the discounts accordingly. In either case, the library would still be required to maintain records documenting its procedures.

### **3 Consortia**

ALA wishes to comment on paragraphs 574, 593, and related discussions of library eligibility in the Joint Board's recommendations. ALA feels it important to provide this discussion for several reasons.

First, the amended definitions in the new Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) of "library" and "library consortium" add legitimacy to the desirability of enabling consortia of libraries and educational institutions or libraries of various types to qualify for universal service support. Any library consortium or cooperative arrangement of libraries or library entities that qualifies for assistance from a State library administrative agency under LSTA should be eligible for discounted rates.

Second, should there be any questions concerning the self-certification process the Joint Board has recommended for (1) eligibility, (2) use for educational purposes, (3) the "not sold or resold" requirement, and (4) identification of partners in aggregated purchases, the State library administrative agency that administers LSTA funds could assist with such verification.

Third, the poverty factor specified in LSTA for targeted library and information services may well provide an appropriate method of determining deeper discounts for libraries in low income areas. Regarding the outreach services portion of LSTA, the statute (subsection 231(a)(2)) refers to "families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) applicable to a family of the size involved."

### **3.1 LSTA**

Related to library eligibility, the Communications Act of 1934, as amended by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, has been further amended by Congress in the course of amending and reauthorizing the Library Services and Construction Act as the Library Services and Technology Act. (See the Omnibus Appropriations bill for fiscal year 1997.) The legislative reference is complex, and ALA cites the complete history for the Commission's convenience.

The Library Services and Technology Act is Subtitle B of the Museum and Library Services Act, which was added as Title VII of H.R. 3610, the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for FY97. The conference report (H. Rept. 104-863) on H.R. 3610 was

enlarged to serve as the end-of-session vehicle for an omnibus appropriations measure funding several federal agencies to which other provisions such as the new LSTA were added. H.R. 3610 was signed into law on September 30, 1996, and is now P.L. 104-208. In the U.S. Code, the Museum and Library Services Act becomes title II of the Museum Services Act (20 U.S.C. 961 et seq.).

Within LSTA, the Communications Act amendment is in Sec. 709, Conforming Amendments. Subsection 708(a)(8) is quoted in full below:

(8) Communications Act of 1934.--Paragraph (4) of section 254(h) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254(h)(4) is amended by striking "library not eligible for participation in State-based plans for funds under title III of the Library Services and Construction Act (20 U.S.C. 335c et seq.)" and inserting "library or library consortium not eligible for assistance from a State library administrative agency under the Library Services and Technology Act."

The Library Services and Technology Act in Section 313 (Definitions) defines a library as follows in subsection (2):

- (2) Library.--The term "library" includes--
  - (A) a public library;
  - (B) a public elementary school or secondary school library;
  - (C) an academic library;
  - (D) a research library, which for the purposes of this subtitle means a library that--
    - (i) makes publicly available library services and materials suitable for scholarly research and not otherwise available to the public; and
    - (ii) is not an integral part of an institution of higher education; and
  - (E) a private library, but only if the State in which such private library is located determines that the library should be considered a library for purposes of this subtitle.

LSTA in section 213(3) defines a library consortium as follows:

(3) Library Consortium.--The term "library consortium" means any local, statewide, regional, interstate, or international cooperative association of library entities which provides for the systematic and effective coordination of the resources of school, public, academic, and special libraries and information centers, for improved services for the clientele of such library entities.

For additional background for the Commission concerning these definitions, ALA points out that the purpose of the Library Services and Technology Act is as follows (section 212):

- (1) to consolidate Federal library service programs;
- (2) to stimulate excellence and promote access to learning and information resources in all types of libraries for individuals of all ages;
- (3) to promote library services that provide all users access to information through State, regional, national and international electronic networks;
- (4) to provide linkages among and between libraries; and
- (5) to promote targeted library services to people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to people with limited functional literacy or information skills.

More specifically, the majority of funds under LSCA are allotted to State library administrative agencies, to be used directly or through subgrants or cooperative agreements, for (subsection 231(a)):

- (1) (A) establishing or enhancing electronic linkages among or between libraries;
- (B) electronically linking libraries with educational, social, or information services;
- (C) assisting libraries in accessing information through electronic networks;
- (D) encouraging libraries in different areas, and encouraging different types of libraries, to establish consortia and share resources, or
- (E) paying costs for libraries to acquire or share computer systems and telecommunications technologies; and
- (2) targeting library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) applicable to a family of the size involved.

Congress, in its action on LSTA, has strengthened its stimulus to different types of libraries to link electronically for purposes of increasing the availability to users of library and information resources. Under the prior LSCA, only one title (title III interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing) had this explicit emphasis. In the new LSTA, any use of funds for technological innovation and electronic linkages, or for various kinds of outreach services, may involve any type of library. The definition of a library was clarified, and was specifically linked to the Communications Act as the operative definition of libraries within universal service.

Together, the new LSTA and the new discounted rates will provide a powerful and complementary stimulus to speed up the rate of connectivity in libraries and of public access through libraries to digital technologies and electronic information resources. The discounted rates help with one aspect of what ALA calls the "4 Cs" -- Connectivity, Computers, Content, and Competencies. LSTA and its predecessor programs complement the Commission's task by helping libraries to aggregate their Connectivity purchasing power, but also by providing stimulus funds for Computers, Content, and Competencies.

#### **4      Lowest Corresponding Price**

The Joint Board recommended that the pre-discount price for services be set at "the lowest price charged to similarly situated non-residential customers for similar services (hereinafter 'lowest corresponding price')." <sup>2</sup> The Joint Board further recommended that the lowest corresponding price also apply in areas in which competition does not exist and that in

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<sup>2</sup>Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Recommended Decision, November 7, 1996 at 540.

either case the lowest corresponding price act as a ceiling for the competitively bid pre-discount price.

In implementing this rule, ALA recommends that the FCC define similar services so that services offered either by tariff or through contract are considered in establishing the lowest comparable price. This is consistent with the Joint Board's recommendation that the Commission establish a rule that provides libraries and schools with maximum flexibility in choosing telecommunications services appropriate to their needs.<sup>3</sup> It also maximizes the number of choices available to libraries thereby promoting a more competitive environment and efficient use of funds.

Furthermore, the FCC should take care to assure that "similarly situated nonresidential customers" not be so narrowly defined as to exclude comparable customers whose situation only marginally differs from that of the eligible institution. Differences in situation should be limited to those factors that demonstrably and significantly impact the direct cost of providing a service in one area versus another and/or one customer versus another. If a service is offered within an area in which a provider is serving or seeking to serve customers, then that service should be available to eligible institutions at a prediscount price equal to the lowest price or rate offered to other nonresidential customers in that same area and under the same general terms and conditions (i.e. length of contract, level of service, etc.).

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<sup>3</sup>Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Recommended Decision, November 7, 1996 at 458

## **5 Timetable and Administration of the Universal Service Support Mechanisms**

ALA agrees with the Joint Board recommendation at 630 and urges the Commission to adopt rules that will permit schools and libraries to begin using discounted services at the start of the 1997-1998 school year. ALA believes that the Commission should require NECA, if used as an interim or permanent fund administrator, to restructure their board of directors so that there is at least a one-third public representation, one-third non-incumbant LEC representation. The non-LEC carriers representation would include competitive access providers, interexchange carriers, local exchange entrants, or wireless providers. The public representation would come from each of the groups for which universal service support was intended, i.e., consumers, libraries, schools, and rural health care providers.

As was noted by the Joint Board, NECA's current composition and past filings make it difficult for the wider community for whom universal service support is intended to have confidence in the neutrality and impartiality of NECA, even as a temporary fund administrator. Thus, it is important that the Commission should ensure that adequate representation of these groups' interests and concerns are present on the universal service advisory board and are manifest in the policies and procedures of both the temporary and permanent fund administrator. A related issue is the unfamiliarity by most of the library and school community with procedures related to rate regulation and fund administration. ALA believes that outreach and education in these areas can help smooth the transition process towards implementation of the Joint Board Recommended Decision and ALA offers its assistance in these efforts.



Respectfully submitted,  
AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

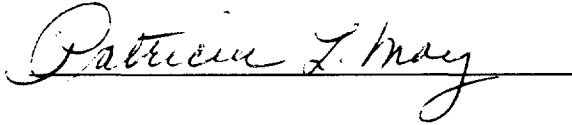
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December 19, 1996

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 2nd day of August, 1996 a copy of the foregoing "Comments of American Library Association on Questions in Public Notice of November 18, 1996" was sent via first class mail, postage prepaid, to the parties on the attached list.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Patricia L. May", is written over a horizontal line.

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# Where the Information Superhighway Meets the Back Roads

By Ron Chepesiuk

THE STATE LIBRARY SPEARHEADS AN EFFORT TO MAKE THE INTERNET UBIQUITOUS IN UTAH

The patron came to the Cedar City Public Library seeking information on so-called "secret shoppers." The term refers to people who are hired by companies to visit their stores and investigate whether the service is good and whether they are following company policies, the patron explained to Library Director Afton Lefevre, who was working the reference desk at the time.

"The patron was retired, liked to travel, and wanted to make a little extra money," Lefevre recalled. "He had heard that many companies were looking for people to work as secret shoppers, but he didn't know how to get in touch with them."

Instead of using the usual printed and CD-ROM reference sources, Lefevre headed for a computer terminal connected to the Internet, called up the InfoSeek search engine, and typed in the term "secret shopper." Presto—the patron was connected to the information superhighway.

"Not only did he find an association for secret shoppers, he was also able to fill out and send an application form he found on the Internet," Lefevre revealed. "He was completely satisfied and so were we. We probably could have found the information by using the traditional reference sources, but I know it would have taken us much longer."

This example of how the library in the small Utah town of Cedar City (population 20,000) used the Internet to help a patron is just one of many that graphically shows the impact the evolving information superhighway is having on the way the state's libraries now provide service. Thanks to the Utah Library Network—an ambitious and well-planned effort on the part of state and local government, libraries, educational institutions, corporations, and volunteers—it's now as easy for residents from rural Utah communities to



**Casey Keisel (at keyboard) and other youngsters get involved with the Internet at the Mount Pleasant Public Library.**

get access to library resources as it is for people living in Salt Lake City, Utah's biggest metropolis, or New York City, Los Angeles, or, for that matter, London, England.

Louis Reinwand, network services manager at the Utah State Library, said that Utah has shown "real vision" in how it has applied the Internet to the state's library system. "Our leaders see the Internet as a positive thing—a tool that can break down the information isolation that has been a barrier to the development of rural libraries in the state," he explained.

Susan Hill, director of the Brigham City Library, which serves a population of some 45,000, said it had been her experience that the Internet contains a lot of "junk"; at times she has found it difficult to locate information on a specific topic. But she quickly added that the Internet has a lot of valuable information that can serve the needs of Utah residents, no matter where they live. "You can find a speech of Bill Clinton or Newt Gingrich almost immediately after they gave it, as well a lot of current information on what's happening with government at the national, state, and local levels. That type of information is not found in the printed and CD-ROM reference sources. And now the state library has a lot of good links, which they keep up to date, and

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that has helped us [public] libraries a lot."

Last year the Logan Public Library began handling frequent requests for copies of bills that were being debated during the state legislative session. "By providing easier access to government resources and services via the Internet, Utah libraries are encouraging better citizenship," said Director Ronald Jenkins.

Thanks to the network, Utah's rural libraries have used electronic mail via the Internet to make interlibrary loan requests more quickly and efficiently; and they now have access to such databases and services as UMI, which can access as many as 1,000 periodicals, 400 of which contain full-text articles. "We would never be able to buy them, but we bought a fax machine and are now able to request an article via the Internet and get it within 20 minutes," Lefevre explained. "We don't have to send out an interlibrary loan request."

Anyone with Internet access can hook up to the Utah Library Network; but, more importantly, computer terminals in public libraries have made access available to patrons who do not have an Internet connection in their homes. The network's World Wide Web site (<http://www.state.lib.ut.us>) is accessible by any Internet search vehicle. "Patrons in any part of Utah now have round-the-clock access to library information," said Bonnie Mellor, director of the Mount Pleasant Public Library.

#### *Humble beginnings*

Remarkably, in the last four years about 85% of Utah's libraries have been linked to the Internet, and that figure continues to climb. No one in Utah would have predicted such spectacular success for the network, though, given its humble beginnings in 1992. The Internet had not yet caught the public's imagination and the state government would have to be convinced that spending thousands of dollars on the application of untested technology would help transform Utah's libraries for the benefit of the entire state. Moreover, not only would the governor and legislators have to catch the vision, but so would numerous library directors and local library board and county commission members.

The Utah Library Network quietly began in early 1992 when the Utah State Library Division and Utah public library community made a request for funding to support network-planning activities. The state legislature gave \$50,000 in one-time funding, and immediately following the legislative session the Public Library Planning Task Force was established. The task force had broad representation from all types of Utah libraries and included one of Utah's delegates to the White House Conference on Library and Information Services. Its mandate: Develop a consensus on the future of public library participation in the network and identify libraries willing to participate in pilot projects. Then, on April 24, 1992, the task force, in con-

junction with Utah State Library, sponsored a statewide conference that officially launched the network initiative.

During the next four months, the task force was busy developing a vision statement; working on a public information plan to promote the network idea; producing a survey that would gather information about the state of automation in Utah; investigating training materials and methods; looking for possible additional funding sources; and, even at this early stage, trying to envision what future network services would be needed. Meanwhile, a team of nine staff members from the state library began to research ways to provide information electronically. Using the structured menu of the gopher protocol and, eventually, the emerging technology of the Internet's World Wide Web, the team began to organize library information on the Internet.

"The network is as much about people as it is about technology," Reinwand explained. "In order for it to reach to its full potential, we knew new human networks would have to be developed and a lot of people would have to work well together."

By September 1992, eight public libraries scattered throughout Utah and serving populations ranging from 3,000 to 165,000 were selected as network pilot sites. Cedar City Public Library was one of the first sites connected. The library made a successful application to the task force for funding of \$5,000, with the library providing an additional \$5,000 in matching funds. The money was used to purchase a LAN workstation and a router that could connect the library to the local university's computer system, which had access to the Internet. "We couldn't have done it without the help of the head of

the computer center at Southern Utah University," Lefevre said. "He volunteered his expertise to connect us to the Internet, so we didn't have to spend money to hire someone to do it."

The Brigham Public Library also got \$5,000 in matching funds from the state to participate in the network project, but Director Hill got additional funds by making a successful application for a Library Services and Construction Act technology grant, which helped the library buy five workstations. "I'm always searching for grants because otherwise, the money is going to have to come out of our budget," Hill explained.

The Utah State Legislature has provided additional one-time funding requests of \$90,000 in 1993, \$224,200 in 1994, and \$83,000 in 1995, as well as an additional \$444,000 in base funding during the three-year period.

From 1992 to 1995, the State Library Division provided \$250,000 in grants toward the costs of connecting public libraries to the Internet's point of presence in Utah, the Utah Education Network. The grants have covered telecommunications equipment and software and can also be used to upgrade the local area network software. In addi-

• *"Our leaders see*  
• *the Internet as a tool*  
• *that can break down*  
• *the information isolation*  
• *that has been a barrier*  
• *to the development*  
• *of rural libraries*  
• *in the state."*

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tion, local communities have provided \$1.1 million in financial support during the three-year period. In 1994 the Ameritech Corporation, one of the world's largest communications companies, headquartered in Provo, Utah, provided major funding and the technical assistance to help a number of libraries in Utah County upgrade their integrated library systems.

### *Training is the key*

With the financial support in place, participants in the Utah Library Network have pursued training aggressively. As Amy Owen, director of the Utah State Library, explained, "If 'location, location, location' is the key to real estate success, 'training, training, training' is the key to network success."

The state library staff compiled and published a network training manual for DOS that was first tested on fellow staff members and then used to train network librarians. In March 1995 a Windows-based training manual was developed, which involved another round of training.

Network librarians, in turn, have trained patrons in the use of the Internet. Hill, for example, began training patrons five or six times a week, beginning in December 1995. She recalled her first session: "I thought three or four people would show up, but about 127 came. I couldn't do any hands-on, so I've had to put people on a waiting list for future classes."

Lefevre said the public response has been so great that

she often wishes her library could hire another staff member. "People expect us to train them, so if they come to the library and don't know how to use the Internet, we have to take time to show them."

The Utah Library Network's success has attracted national attention. On July 12, 1995, the Utah Library Network was named winner in the government category of the first national Information Infrastructure Awards, which were presented in Washington, D.C., at a prestigious ceremony hosted by Dick Cavett (*AL*, Sept. 1995, p. 754). Selected from over 100 competitors, the network was described at the ceremony as a "powerful, effective, and efficient learning resource for all the state's citizens" and recognized as an "example of how the potential of the information highway can be harnessed to benefit communities and improve the lives of their citizens."

The network, however, does not plan to rest on its laurels. Plans are in the works for the development of new information resources, such as providing access to electronic versions of state publications, building adequate workstation support for public access in network libraries, continued training of both staff and the public, and looking for ways to put important local information resources on the World Wide Web.

Some of Utah's rural communities are planning to develop a home page on the Web and their public libraries plan to be an important part of it. As Hill explained, "We are going to help our community become an electronic village." ♦

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